UNION STREET DISTRICT

UNION STREET

Union Street is a cross street running roughly north to south, laid out by Isaac Shriver to connect West Main Street with Pennsylvania Avenue in Westminster. Shriver owned the whole piece of property between "The Forks" and what is now Western Maryland College and laid out this western part of Westminster after purchasing the tract in 1834. Union Street (probably named as it unites Pennsylvania Avenue and West Main Street although Civil War conitations are not to be ignored) was all but certainly intended to house the City's free black population.

The buildings that front the two sides of Union Street are a mixture of vernacular styles, but are wonderfully united in history, age, and scale. Residential buildings seem to consist of an approximately equal amount of single and double units. One popular form of a duplex is exemplified by numbers 49-51 and by numbers 57-59 Union Street. These units consisted originally of long two story gable roofed frame buildings divided in half with each unit being two bays wide with a hall and parlor plan. The principal facades of these buildings are given interest by hipped roof porches and by careful spacing of solids and voids. The rears of each of the two units in this long buildings also had matching bays (two on each of the two floors) opposite of those on the principal facade.

Another popular double house may be seen in nos. 45-47, 35-37. These are also double units but are perpendicular to the street, that is, they too are gabled roofed but the gable end faces Union Street. These buildings are taller than, and later than, the other double units, (none exist in the old photograph).

In all these double units, color plays an extremely important factor. Color defines ownership and makes for a pleasantly varigated streetscape. Use of color does define ownership is probably the most important of the latter two types, which could easily read as double family units. (The porches help define units individuality in the earlier type.) The single family units on Union Street are generally similar to those found elsewhere in the City, that is consisting of two perpendicular two-story gable-roofed sections with the principal facade consisting of three regularly spaced bays per floor. Numbers 6, 8, and 36 Union Street again stress centrality with their entrance doors being the center ground story bay, while 45 Union Street has its door to the side. Other central door plans include numbers 10, 20 and 22 Union Street.

What is puzzling about the origins of the street, is how and why it began as a black section, a characteristic it has, apparently, had from its beginning. (The 76 City's map has such labels as "Colored school", and "Colored M. E. Church").

CARR 501
MACI #070-015329

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Union Street District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Union Street

CITY, TOWN
Westminster ___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
7

STATE
Maryland

COUNTY
Carroll

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	___ PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	___ AGRICULTURE	___ MUSEUM
___ BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	___ UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	___ PARK
___ STRUCTURE	___ BOTH	___ WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___ SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	___ ENTERTAINMENT	X RELIGIOUS
___ OBJECT	___ IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	___ GOVERNMENT	___ SCIENTIFIC
	___ BEING CONSIDERED	___ YES: UNRESTRICTED	___ INDUSTRIAL	___ TRANSPORTATION
		___ NO	___ MILITARY	___ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Various Owners (See Attached Sheet) Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:
Folio #:

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Carroll County Office Building

STREET & NUMBER
Center Street

CITY, TOWN
Westminster

STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

CARR-501

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Union Street is a cross street running roughly north to south, laid out by Isaac Shriver to connect West Main Street with Pennsylvania Avenue in Westminster. Shriver owned the whole piece of property between "The Forks" and what is now Western Maryland College and laid out this western part of Westminster after purchasing the tract in 1834. Union Street (probably named as it unites Pennsylvania Avenue and West Main Street although Civil War commutations are not to be ignored) was all but certainly intended to house the City's free black population.

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Another popular double house may be seen in nos. 45-47, 35-37. These are also double units but are perpendicular to the street, that is, they too are gabled roofed but the gable end faces Union Street. These buildings are taller than, and later than, the other double units, (none exist in the old photograph). Bay placement here is extremely irregular with the ground floor consisting of door units on the extreme ends, double hung sash windows in the center. Westminster generally stresses axis, and this importance is also evident here, as the second and third story windows are located directly above those on the ground floor creating an extremely powerful central axis running through the gable roofs peak. (Ground floor reads DWWD.)

Another, and later still, type of double house is that of a deep house with a single pitch roof sloping away from

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CARR-501

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	X COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1845-1865 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although the earliest beginnings of Union Street are unknown, the area is unquestionably one of the most intriguing in the City. The late Dr. Grace L. Tracey, former resident of Hampstead and noted local historian, in her essay called "The Five Villages That Became a Town", notes that "after the death of John Logsden, Sr., the trustee of his estate sold 'Fanny's Meadow' at a public auction... Phillip Lance bought Logsden Tavern and 17 acres of land at the road junction for $3.00 per acre. In 1834 he conveyed it all to Isaac Shriver". Another local historian, Mary Bostwick Shellman, in her essay, "The Early Pioneers" comments that "after Isaac Shriver, one of our sturdy pioneers, purchased the old tavern property now known as the Cassell home, he opened the street and called it Union Street. To connect the two roads he named the two sections Pennsylvania Avenue and West Main Street, and laid it off in a number of building lots." Speculators purchased several of these lots and built the present houses: for example one George A. W. Bowersox bought the northwesternmost four lots on the street in 1854 for $140 and built four double houses thereon (including 49-51 and 57-59); deeds selling off these individual lots dated in the 1850's note that the lots "are improved with...double frame weatherboarded houses recently erected", or make references to "The center of the partition wall at the front of the double houses erected". (See, for example, Carroll County Deed Book 17, Page 323 dated October 31, 1854 from George A. W. Bowersox to Frances Weaver for the house number today 57-59 Union Street.) The southeastern part of the street, containing the central area of Shriver's triangular part, was apparently bought by the Roop-Royer family soon after Shriver acquired the property for an October 17, 1849 deed conveys from Jesse Royer to David Wantz nearly four acres "on New Street" the metes and bounds description for which would match this interior piece of land. Wantz must have been another speculator for he soon thereafter began conveying individual lots.

Probably very soon after the first buildings were erected, public buildings must have followed. The Union

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CARR-501

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Christopher Weeks, Consultant

DATE
August, 1977

ORGANIZATION
Westminster Historical Sites Survey

TELEPHONE

STREET & NUMBER
City Hall - c/o Public Works Department

CITY OR TOWN
Westminster

STATE
Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

PS-1108

#7, continuation sheet 1.

the street. Some extant types of this building are 18-19½, 2-4 and 31-33 Union Street. These units reflect styles popular elsewhere in Westminster. Generally speaking these units are also two bays wide, creating a four bay facade, and have regularly aligned bay treatment readings, on the ground floor DWWD, with four windows above. Windows are uniformally double-hung sashes with generally one over one panes. Roofs are more emphatically noted here, these flat roofed units uniformally having thick denticulated modillioned cornices.

In all these double units, color plays an extremely important factor. Color defines ownership and makes for a pleasantly varigated streetscape. Use of color does define ownership is probably the most important of the latter two types, which could easily read as double family units. (The porches help define units individuality in the earlier type.)

The single family units on Union Street are generally similar to those found elsewhere in the City, that is consisting of two perpendicular two-story gable-roofed sections with the principal facade consisting of three regularly spaced bays per floor. Numbers 6, 8, and 36 Union Street again stress centrality with their entrance doors being the center ground story bay, while 45 Union Street has its door to the side. Other central door plans include numbers 10, 20 and 22 Union Street.

Doubtless the general small scale of the homes on Union Street explains while there is also an abundance of two bay wide houses. Both the duplex units and some single family units present only two bays towards the street, an interesting and marked contrast to the rest of the City. Number 61 Union Street is one such house, a house that otherwise follows the standard area vernacular form, while number 12 Union Street is interesting as it presents its gable end to the side and is deep from the street rather than long with the street. Both of these singled-out two-bay wide houses can be read as half scale versions already discussed duplexes: number 61 clearly has a relationship with his neighbor duplex 57-59, and number 12 Union Street is visably a half scale copy of 45-47 Union Street.

One of the more striking buildings on the street, indeed of the City is the Union Street M. E. Church, located about halfway up the street on the east side. (See separate form for the church, as well as for numbers 10, 20, 49-51, and 57-59).

Street M. E. Church, and the former schoolhouse both are indicated on the 1876 plat of the City, and the church is clearly visible on a c. 1870 photograph of the area. Thus, by the mid-1870's Union Street achieved its present appearance with 15 or 20 dwelling units some shops, a school, and church.

What is puzzling about the origins of the street, is how and why it began as a black section, a characteristic it has, apparently, had from its beginning. (The 76 City's map has such labels as "Colored school", and "Colored M. E. Church"). Interviews with older citizens around town, as well as several elderly Union Street residents have produced various conflicting theories and proposals. Some suggest that the street was laid off to house workers at the nearby Western Maryland College. While it's possible that many of the residents would have worked at the college, eventually, most of the houses on the street pre-date the establishment of the college thus precluding that particular cause and effect theory. In fact, the College, which is the greatest landlord on Union Street, did not take possession of its several properties until this century, and got them, in large part, through wills and other bequests. An interview with Phillip Schaeffer, business manager of Western Maryland College, revealed that, in fact, those properties the college did purchase out right, it purchased not necessarily to house workers, but to provide a buffer for the eastern section of the campus, separating the campus in the City, separating town and gown. Another popular theory was that the street was laid out to house free blacks who might have been manumitted when the Logsden farm, "Fanny's Meadow" was sold and sub-divided, presumably thus freeing former farm workers. Another possibility is that there was a large body of blacks in the City in the early 19th century who worked as dosmetic servants, a number that would have increased as both the population and its prosperity increased. This theory would suggest that those domestic servants who did not live in the houses of their employers, or families of the servants, might have lived on Union Street. This would explain, perhaps, the fact that the street was laid out as a black neighborhood within a dozen years after Westminster was chosen County Seat for the newly established Carroll County; possibly the new prosperity would have created a demand for black domestic help. Mary Shellman's essay on "The Early Pionerrs", written in 1924, notes that she "must close with a few words to those dearest memories to my child life, the faithful old black faces that never gave me a frown, and whose kindly voices spoke ownly of affection and love. The Snowdens, the Bruces, and Hardens, the Paralays, and the Irelands, and the Behoes, the Bells and Cromwells....the first ice-cream ever made in Westminster was made by Mary Behoe, a colored woman, who once a week, would send her husband, Billy Behoe, a slave owned by Mr. Jacob Reese, father of Dr. James W. Reese, to inform the gentleman who would take their sweethearts to her home in Irishtown to partake of a delicacy." The whole Isaac Shriver's addition was nicknamed "Irishtown" thus indicating that Mary Behoe and her husband lived on or near Union Street. Furthermore, the names listed as living on Union Street in 1881 City Directory, have similarities to the name listed hereby Miss Shellman.

In any event, whatever the actual origin, of the Street, it is clear and definite that Union Street today, as it did a

#8, continuation sheet 2.

hundred years ago, forms one of the most pleasantly cohesive units in the City. It is a cohesion made not just of character of the residents but, more especially, the character of the residences. Those homes that are privately owned are almost without exception well cared for, and are little changed from their original appearance. Further, the painting of the homes, a device to deliniate ownership on row houses, as well as the several fine trees that line the street, all provide a fine soft visual unity. Regardless of whether the houses are single or duplex, regardless of whether they were originally log or not, there is a definite sense of small scale urban space about the street that unifies and sets it apart from the larger scale thoroughfares, Pennsylvania Avenue, and West Main Street that border it.

UNION STREET: OWNERS

NO.	OWNER	DEED REFERENCE
61	Elmer E. Myers	145/576
59	David Brown	296/232
57	William C. Brown	373/103
51	Charles Cooper	561/323
49	Harriet Frisby	164/408
45-47	W.M.C.	162/316
43	W.M.C.	259/59
39	Robert Squirrell	185/320
37	W.M.C.	173/67
35	John McLane	146/156
31-33	W.M.C.	168/423
29	W.M.C.	163/244
27-27½	W.M.C.	160/508
25	Ralph Morrison	406/75
23	W.M.C.	542/602
21-19	W.M.C.	159/153
17	W.M.C.	171/594
36	Richard Frye Diggs et al	655/77
34	T. Pearre Owens	501/373
20	George H. Gibson	527/103
18-18½	W.M.C.	
10-12	Richard Frye Diggs et al	655/77
8	Helen D. Dowery	585/744
6	M. Celinda Dorm	597/321
2-4	W.M.C.	159/412

150 %

LXXVII

83

150%

56

p. ~~54~~

CARR-501

Union Street taken looking east of College Hill late 19th century

(courtesy Carroll Co. Historical Soc via C. Weeks)

20

CARR-501

View over Westminster from College
1902

CARR-501

CARR-501

105

CARR-501

KING'S MARKET

CARR-501

82%

CARR-501

85

~~82~~ 7c

P. ~~54~~ 56

45-47

49-51

LXXIV

KING'S MARKET
QUALITY MEATS GROCERIES

CARR-501

CARR-501

36 (½ [illegible])

S.S.

86 P57

CARR-501

#86

57

P. 55

S.S.

31-33
(flat)

35-37

LXXX

Union Street: 3 ~~types~~ styles of housing.